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ABSTRACT

This booklet is intended to acquaint potential secondary school students of foreign languages and their parents with the purpose of studying a second language and the benefits which derive from such study. Questions and answers are given in the following sections: (1) Why Should You Study A Foreign Language?; (2) Should You Study A Foreign Language?; (3) How Will You Learn A Foreign Language?; (4) What to Do With Your Foreign Language Ability; and (5) How Parents Can Help Their Children Learn A Foreign Language. (RL)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Say

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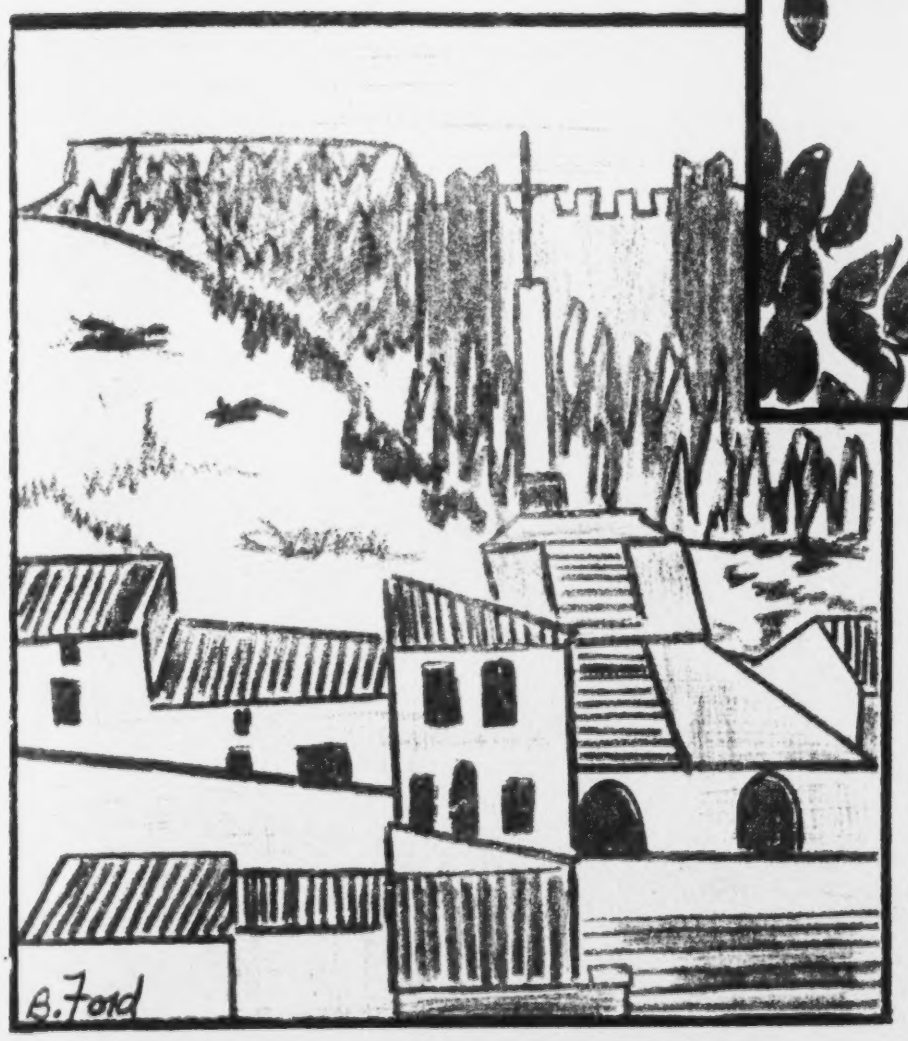

Different !

North Tonawanda Public Schools
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
236 GOUNDRY STREET
NORTH TONAWANDA, NEW YORK 14120

W. CARL FENWICK
Assistant Superintendent
for Instructional Services

May, 1972

A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

American education today is seriously concerned with the achievement of international understanding and cooperation. Here at home, as cities merge and community life becomes more complicated, our skill in using language and its written symbols must become progressively sharper. We know that one does not begin to understand precisely how persons in other cultures think and feel until he comprehends and uses effectively the language in which they express their thoughts and feelings. It is for this reason that foreign language learning has many contributions to make to the cultivation of better understanding among peoples of different linguistic background. This letter, therefore, is to inform you of the fine opportunity for the study of modern foreign languages in the secondary schools of North Tonawanda.

Currently our language department offers four-year sequences in French, German, and Spanish. Under the direction of Miss Maryalice Seagrave, chairman of the language department, experienced and enthusiastic teachers provide for the best possible instructional setting. Most members of the department hold advanced academic degrees and have had the benefit of foreign study.

Students beginning their instruction by the new audio-lingual approach to language study are introduced immediately to the use of modern language laboratories, textbooks, records, tape recordings, and library audio-visual equipment utilizing a collection of films, filmstrips, transparencies, slides, pictures, posters, and related realia. In addition, active language clubs provide an opportunity for students to share their newly acquired knowledges and language skills with other interested students and teachers in an informal social atmosphere.

It is my hope that each student and parent will consider the advantages of foreign language study during the secondary school years. To help you in your decision concerning this matter, members of the foreign language department have compiled this informative booklet.

Cordially,

W. Carl Fenwick

W. Carl Fenwick
Assistant Superintendent for
Instructional Services

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I

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of this Booklet

To acquaint potential students of foreign languages and their parents with the program available in the department, the purposes of studying a foreign language and the benefits and advantages derived from it.

To make the student aware that the knowledge of a second language is not only of cultural value but is essential to our international relationships; to point out to the students that the best way to communicate with other peoples is in their language.

To introduce students to the vast number of exciting and interesting job opportunities available to people with a knowledge of another language.

To acquaint students with the various techniques used to create the unique experience that a foreign language classroom offers; to introduce students to the role that they will be expected to play as well as the roles of the teacher and parents.

To present questions and answers to students which previous foreign language students have had concerning language study.

II

WHY SHOULD YOU STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

A. Communicating with the peoples of the world

WHY? 1. To help you in traveling abroad, as a tourist, a businessman or government representative. (Remember the Ugly American!)

WHY? 2. To give you an experience to last a lifetime -- being able to speak and read a foreign language. (Somewhere, somehow, someday -- when you least expect it!)

WHY? 3. To help you learn other languages more easily, as well as your own. (Who wants to speak with forked tongue?)

B. Choosing a career

WHY? 1. To help you open the many doors to job placements which require you to speak a foreign language and to actually live in a foreign country. (How many times does opportunity knock?)

WHY? 2. To give you an additional asset for any career you might choose. (Maybe 2 + 2 does = 5!)

C. Getting along with the peoples of the world

WHY? 1. To help you explain America to foreign people both at home and abroad. (We get questions, questions, questions!)

WHY? 2. To help you discover the values of international understanding and give you a broader outlook on life. (Adventuring didn't stop with Columbus!)

WHY? 3. To help you learn to be considerate of foreign customs and to understand your own better. (You mean you don't eat peanut butter sandwiches?)

WHY? 4. To help you recognize the urgency of foreign language ability if the United States is to accept its international responsibility. (How can we find out the facts if we don't know the language?)

WHY? 5. To help you discover that language expresses a way of life, the way people think, react and feel. (So that's what he meant!)

WHY? 6. To help you discover another culture through original materials. (That's what they mean by 'It suffers in translation'!)

WHY? 7. To learn that while differences do exist, they are not obstacles; that there are different ways of doing things; that to be different is not to be wrong, stupid, or incompetent. (That's a newly developing nation, not a backward one!)

D. Improving yourself

WHY? 1. To help you understand the history, geography, economy and education of other people. (Where do they put all the people in that little country?)

WHY? 2. To help you enjoy the music, art and the literature of other lands. (Everything from Bach to 'pop' art to "Don Quixote"!)

III

SHOULD YOU TAKE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

You SHOULD, if you have been fairly successful in your English studies!

You SHOULD, if you know something about the structure of your own language!

You SHOULD, if you like to talk to others!

You SHOULD, if you are interested in speaking in a foreign tongue!

You SHOULD, if you are eager to learn about the way of life of other peoples!

You SHOULD, if you are willing to do a little work outside of the classroom!

LEARNING TO SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE is a SKILL which is comparable to learning to play a sport or a musical instrument, to drive a car, to sew or to type!! REMEMBER: In all of these skills PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

WHEN SHOULD YOU BEGIN TO STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

As SOON as possible! RIGHT NOW!

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

As LONG as possible! The longer the better!

WHAT LANGUAGES CAN YOU STUDY IN NORTH TONAWANDA?

FRENCH
GERMAN
SPANISH } for four years

IV

HOW WILL YOU LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

Your teacher brings with him the techniques and the know-how to assist you in mastering this new language. He (or she) is your model and guide. Language learning is not a lecture type experience. The teacher explains the functions of different words and serves as your model. You try to imitate his pronounciation as closely as possible. In the classroom your teacher needs ACTIVE students. You learn through doing; the more you use the language, the more you will gain.

Language learning involves the use of your ears (to listen to the sounds), your speaking-organs (to produce the sounds) and your eyes (to recognize by means of gestures and pictures the meaning of what you hear). This way you do not have to fall back on English too often for translations, but you will be able to grasp the meaning through visual aids in the form of posters, filmstrips and films.

At least the first two weeks of your language study are done orally. You hear and repeat short sentences. Each phrase concentrates on a sound of the foreign language which may be like a sound you already know or may be completely new to you.

Once you have mastered these sentences you will receive your textbook and see them in written form. You should remember how to pronounce these sentences, and hopefully you will not fall back into your English habits when reading them. That is why each unit in your book begins with a dialog, a conversation taken from everyday life. You will first listen to it and learn it through repetition till you know it thoroughly. Each unit concentrates on certain points of the grammar. They are used in the dialog, and then you learn

why the forms are the way they are. You practice them in exercises, orally in the classroom and in the Language Lab, and in written form. An exercise book (separate from your textbook) provides several drills for each unit covered.

The LAB is a special classroom which has 24-30 positions. Each student occupies a position which supplies him with an earphone and a microphone. The teacher is at the front of the room at the console. He plays a tape for you which gives you instructions on when to listen and when to respond. You will be asked to repeat what you hear, complete a sentence or change it according to what you have been doing during your class sessions. The correct answer is always supplied and you will be given a second chance to make a correct statement. You will use the LAB at least two times a week for approximately 20 minutes. This will enable you to listen to native speakers, practice sounds and sentence structures, and listen to your own voice.

In order to gain the greatest profit from your language studies you must be willing to devote a little of your own time to the language learning. Your teacher will give you short assignments, either to copy a short paragraph so that you may learn how to write the words, or to do a written exercise in your workbook. You will be asked to learn sentences orally so that you can use them in various situations. Use the foreign language also outside of the classroom; talk to your friends and classmates who study the same language.

V

NOW, BE PRACTICAL! YOU DO WANT TO USE YOUR FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITY! WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH IT?

There are many practical uses for skill in a foreign language. Foreign language ability is always an asset, and competence in a foreign language can lead to attractive career opportunities. It places the jobseeker in an advantageous and enviable position.

There are two types of vocational opportunities open to foreign language students:

1. those requiring proficiency in a foreign language
2. those for which foreign language ability is a supplemental and desirable asset

In both cases, your foreign language ability will open doors to many different careers, giving you an "inside track", putting you in a special position.

Some examples of the many careers where foreign languages can be used either as a primary or secondary qualification are:

I. Business and Industry

Advertising
Airlines
Banking and Investing
Broadcasting
Engineering
Export-Import Trade
Hotel-Motel Management and Service
Journalism
Merchandising
Publishing and Editing
Radio and T. V.
Telephone and Telegraph Service
Travel Agencies

II. Federal Government Service and Related Activities

1. Departments of the Federal Government

Justice
State
Treasury

2. Agencies of the Federal Government

Central Intelligence Agency
National Security Agency
Peace Corps
United States Information Agency (Voice of America)
Vista

3. Federal Government Related Organizations

The Pan American Union
United Nations

4. Military Personnel

III. Teaching and Related Activities

American Field Service
International Student Information Service
Overseas employment
Teaching

IV. Vocations and Professions

Interpreter and translator
Librarian
Medical Services
Missionary
Musician
Secretary-Stenographer-Typist
Social Worker - Red Cross, CARE, YMCA

VI

FOR PARENTS ONLY!

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

YOU CAN:

Encourage his efforts, recognize his progress, and attach importance to his achievements.

Be alert to opportunities in the community which involve the foreign culture your child is studying; notice opportunities for the youngster to attend or participate in such activities as folk festivals, choral groups, concerts, and church services which involve the use of a foreign language.

Acquire for your home books, magazines, newspapers, music, art objects and handicrafts representative of the foreign culture.

Invite foreign visitors and exchange students or teachers to your home.

Keep up with current events in the country and area of the world where the language your son or daughter is studying is spoken; check newspapers and magazines for relevant news and call it to your family's attention; ask your child about foreign names you hear on radio or television.

Make known to your son or daughter the opportunities available locally to hear foreign language broadcasts; if possible provide a short-wave radio.

Create opportunities for the use of the foreign language at home among members of the family, perhaps Sunday morning breakfast.

Participate in international exchange programs.

Formulate travel plans which will add to the family's awareness of the foreign culture and knowledge of the foreign language--

a trip to an area where the foreign language is used, on this continent or abroad,

excursions to places where the foreign language can be heard (United Nations headquarters in New York, Pan American Union and foreign embassies in Washington, D. C., or an International House on a university campus),

in your sightseeing, look for the foreign influence in city plans, architecture, art, etc.

look for names of places that have a foreign history,

include a meal in a foreign restaurant where your son or daughter can read a foreign menu and order in the foreign language.

Be on the lookout for foreign films and plays which appear in your locality.

Suggest that your child enter into correspondence with foreign students and if possible, exchange tape recordings with friends who speak the language he is studying.

Allow your youngster to play an active role in the foreign language club, invite the club to your home, help plan programs, chaperone their field trips.

Attend any school performance in which your child is participating in the foreign language.

VII

TELL IT LIKE IT IS!

1. Will I learn more about the language of the country or the country itself?

   The main emphasis is on the language itself. It is impossible to learn a language without also becoming acquainted with the life and cultural background of the people who speak that language. If you ever have the opportunity to live or travel among these people, you will be able to participate in their culture with knowledge and understanding.

2. Do I have to pass a final examination?

   After each of the first two years a school examination is given. At the end of the third year you will take a State regents examination. The final grade in all levels is computed in the same way as for any other course.

3. How long will I have to study a foreign language in order to speak it fluently?

   At the end of four years you should be able to speak with a pronunciation acceptable to a native speaker, with accuracy, and with adequate fluency. You should be able to participate in a conversation or group discussion as well as to speak at some length when a situation calls for it.

4. How many years should I study a foreign language?

   You should consider a minimum of three years and preferably four years of language study in high school in order to reap the greatest benefits. By the end of high school you will know whether or not you want to continue it in college--either for vocational reasons or for enjoyment.

5. Will I be able to use the Spanish I will learn in my class in North Tonawanda in Mexico?

   Yes, you will.

6. Are any of the foreign languages I might study similar to English?

   English has borrowed from French, German and Spanish. In turn English words appear in these languages. The four languages are interrelated. These similarities make some parts of foreign language study easier.

7. Will my classwork and homework be mostly oral?

Much emphasis is placed on listening and speaking, but the skills of reading and writing are taught after the first few weeks. In upper level courses reading and writing are stressed quite heavily, but you will continue to use your oral competence.

8. Will my class be conducted entirely in the foreign language?

A general rule of thumb is that the teacher will use as much of the foreign language as possible and only as much English as necessary.

9. Will I have to develop a good pronunciation in order to speak well?

You can converse even if pronunciation is not good. However, good pronunciation is one of the prime goals of the course and will be stressed throughout your foreign language courses. This training begins the first day and concentrates on sounds which are different from English.

10. Will I have to do a lot of memorizing?

Through the process of imitation and repetition one learns a language. This is a form of memorization, but it is done little by little and mostly in class at the beginning. This takes much of the work out of memorizing.

11. I don't like to travel. I don't care for foreign culture. I am a real American and I feel that if anyone wants to communicate with me, let him learn to speak English! Why should I take a foreign language? What benefit will I derive from it?

Even if you really believe what you have just said, you will benefit from taking a foreign language because studying a foreign language is a broadening and humanizing experience. Exposure to another language, another people, another culture, another way of life, and another set of values is a unique experience you will not easily forget.

You owe it to yourself to try a foreign language. We guarantee to change the narrow biased viewpoint you have revealed in your question. We'll change you from the "Ugly American".